

SHORT COMMUNICATION

***Lepidosperma curtisiae* (Cyperaceae), a new Australian species**

Preparation of treatments of the genus *Lepidosperma* for the 'Flora of New South Wales' (by K.L.W.), 'Flora of Victoria' (K.L.W.) and 'Students Flora of Tasmania' (DIM) led us to the conclusion that an undescribed taxon had been hidden amongst material of *L. lineare* R. Br. and *L. inops* F. Muell. ex Rodway. This species, *L. curtisiae*, is here described.

Lepidosperma curtisiae K.L. Wilson & D.I. Morris, sp. nov.

L. lineari affinis sed culmis brevioribus, foliis culmos superantibus, differt. A *L. inopi* rhizomate horizontali, inflorescentia grandiore, bractea involucrali rare inflorescentiam multo superanti, differt.

TYPE: TASMANIA: Lewisham, edge of shore, W.M. Curtis s.n., 19 August 1951; holo NSW; iso HO.

Tufted or mat-forming perennial with very short horizontal rhizomes. *Basal leaves* of innovations reduced to a ± shining sheathing base with or without a reduced lamina. *Upper leaves* very shallowly biconvex or planoconvex, stiffly erect, ± rigid, up to 30 cm long, 0.7–2(–2.5) mm wide, with adaxial or both margins minutely scaberulous; sheaths straw-coloured in upper portion to dark yellow-brown at base, not viscid. *Culms* 2–17(–25) cm high, always shorter and slightly narrower than the longest leaves. *Inflorescence* narrow-ovate to oblong in outline, 1.5–5 cm long, with 5–12(–20) spikelets; basal involucral bract usually shorter than the inflorescence but occasionally equalling or exceeding it. *Spikelets* 4.5–6 mm long, with a single bisexual floret and 0–2 male florets. *Glumes* 5–7, pale red-brown, becoming dull with age, ovate-lanceolate; the 2 or 3 lowest empty, shorter than upper glumes; fertile upper glumes 4–5.5 mm long, often with long-aristate tips. *Anthlers* 0.8–2.7 mm long, excluding apical appendage 0.2–0.5 mm long. *Nut* 2.5–3.5 mm long, 1.3–1.5 mm diam., ovoid to narrow-ellipsoid, with 3 prominent ribs; hypogynous scales obtuse to acute, without long ciliate tips. Figure 1.

DISTRIBUTION: In the North East, Midlands and East Coast regions of Tasmania; from the South-eastern region of South Australia through southern Victoria to the Snowfields region of eastern Victoria; and scattered in the Tablelands regions of New South Wales.

HABITAT: In dry situations in open woodland and heath; from near sea level to about 300 m altitude in Tasmania, ranging to about 1200 m altitude in New South Wales.

NOTES: This taxon has been confused with the related species *L. lineare* R. Br. and *L. inops* F. Muell. ex Rodway. It differs from *L. lineare* in having shorter culms, the leaves always longer than the culms, and hypogynous scales without long ciliate tips. *L. inops* differs in being a dwarf species with a vertical rhizome, with the basal leaves of innovations with a fully developed lamina, and with an inflorescence of one or two small clusters of 2–4 spikelets, the basal involucral bract always being much longer than the inflorescence. The leaf bases in *L. inops* are paler yellow-brown, and the leaves are arranged distichously so that the innovations are flat and fan-shaped, whereas in *L. curtisiae* the innovations are more or less rounded in cross-section.

Material of *L. curtisiae* from New South Wales is more variable than that from other parts of the distribution. In particular, culms are often taller so that they are about as long as the leaves, and the leaves often have red-tinged sheaths. Such specimens are here tentatively referred to this species but further study of this variation is needed, especially in the Blue Mountains region.

EPITHET: Named for Dr Winifred Mary Curtis, who numbered this species amongst the many that she has collected in her long and eminent career in botany.

SELECTED SPECIMENS SEEN: TASMANIA: North of Risdon Brook Reservoir, *Collier 1487*, June 1986 (HO); Powranna, south of Perth, *Collier 3869*, Sep 1991 (HO); south-east slope of Porter Hill, *Buchanan 3754*, Oct 1984 (HO); Petal Point, *Moscal 3224*, Oct 1983 (HO, MEL); 1.3 km W along Interlaken road from Midland Highway near Tunbridge, *Wilson 6576*, Feb 1986 (NSW, HO). SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Hundred of Coles, south-east corner, on roadside (Hundred of Coles is about 40 km SW of Naracoorte), *Hunt 1969*, Apr 1964 (AD n.v., HO, NSW). VICTORIA: Wimmera: Miram South Dam, *Beaglehole 84143*, Sep 1986 (MEL, HO, NSW). Wannon: Heathmere, Henty Highway, *Beaglehole 19248*, 1950 (MEL, NSW). Grampians: Victoria Valley, Syphon Road, north of Big Cord, Glenelg River, *Beaglehole 24865*, Feb 1968 (MEL, BRI, CANB, GENT, HO, K, NSW, PERTH, RNG). Volcanic Plain: Batesford Sanctuary on Moorabool River, *Carr 7307*, Jan 1977 (MEL, NSW). Otway Plain: 6 km NNW of Anglesea P.O., *Beaglehole 63254*, Dec 1978 (MEL, HO, NSW). Midlands: C. 20 km WNW of Seymour P.O., *Beaglehole 50114*, Aug 1975 (MEL, HO, NSW). Gippsland Plain: Bellarine Peninsula, Mannerim, *LeBreton*, Mar 1991 (MEL, HO, NSW). Snowfields: Native Cat Track, Great Dividing Range, *Beaglehole 36627 & Finck*, Jan 1971 (MEL, HO, NSW). NEW SOUTH WALES: Northern Tablelands: 1 km N of Crown Mtn, Backwater, *Williams*, Dec 1977 (HO, NSW ex NE). Central Tablelands: Du Faur's Rocks, Mt Wilson, *Coveny 6151*, *Benson*, *Johuson & Wilson*, Mar 1975 (NSW, HO). Southern Tablelands: Nungar Plain, Snowy Mountains, *Mueller 3129*, Mar 1956 (NSW, HO).



Figure 1. Typical habit (a, $\times 0.3$; b, $\times 0.2$) and inflorescence (a, $\times 1$; b, $\times 0.5$) of a, *Lepidosperma curtisiae*, and b, *L. lineare*. Drawn by Nicola Oram.

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